

Date: _____

SUPPORT FOR S.802

An Act to Protect & Enhance the Rights of Child & Adult Victims and Witnesses of Crime

I / We, the undersigned, **strongly urge you to support** Senate Bill 802, *An Act to Protect & Enhance the Rights of Child & Adult Victims & Witnesses of Crime*.

This long overdue legislation, informed by a large and diverse number of victims/survivors, victim service providers, criminal justice personnel, and others, amends and strengthens the existing Victim Bill of Rights (MGL Ch. 258B). It will reinstate Massachusetts as a leader in the protection of the rights of child and adult victims and witnesses of crime.

I support the overall content of this legislation, in particular, provisions that ensure:

- broader notification of existing victim rights, including making notice available and accessible to non-English speaking victims and witnesses, and to families of victims in unsolved homicides, among others.
- a basic sense of security in the Commonwealth's courthouses for victims and witnesses – specifically, with a separate and secure waiting area in all courthouses, as promised by law over 20 years ago. This will significantly help protect against all too common threats and intimidation of witnesses when they come to court.
- specific rights for victims and witnesses who are children or whom have disabilities such as having a support person in the courtroom during their testimony, providing a general orientation to the courtroom and court procedures, and allowing for Victim Impact Statements to be provided via audio or video as necessary.

I / we stand with victims and survivors, all the District Attorneys in the Commonwealth, and numerous law enforcement and criminal justice professionals and victim service providers across the state. **I / we urge the Judiciary Committee to favorably report S.802.**

Signed:

Agency/Program/Affiliation:

City/Town(s) Represented:

Once Completed, Return to:
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